A Multiple Indicator Analysis of Drug and Alcohol Use

in LaPorte County: 2008 to 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Overall Drug Treatment Trends

Drug treatment trends show mostly stable cocaine and methamphetamine episodes, while the increase in heroin and other opiates has increased tremendously and alcohol treatments have dropped significantly. In spite of these changes, the most common substance for which LaPorte area residents entered treatment continues to be alcohol. In both 2008 and 2011, the most recent year data was available, alcohol treatment admissions compromised the largest percentage of admissions.

- The most common illicit substance for which LaPorte County residents sought treatment in 2011 was for heroin, which increased by more than 560% over a three year period.
- Combined, treatment admissions for opiate pills and heroin use represented 46% of all illicit drug treatment episodes in LaPorte County in 2011. This percentage was just 29% in 2008.
- Opiate pill treatment admissions increased 250%, from 16 cases in 2008 to 56 in 2011. This represents a tripling in opiate pill treatment admissions.

Alcohol Indicators: Treatment and Law Enforcement Data

While alcohol treatment episodes still comprise nearly half of all admissions in LaPorte County in 2011, these numbers represent a significant decline from 2008 numbers, when alcohol made up nearly three-fourths of all treatment admissions.

- The number of individuals admitted for alcohol use disorder decreased by 17%, from 295 cases in 2008 to 244 cases in 2011.
- Individuals under aged 30 made up slightly more than 40% of all alcohol treatment episodes, and this percentage remained relatively stable over time.
- The majority of people entering treatment for alcohol in LaPorte County (75%) was white in both 2008 and 2011.
- The most notable change in alcohol treatment admissions occurred among women, as their admissions for alcohol treatment increased 14% from 2008 to 2011.
- Treatment admissions for males decreased 28% from 2008 to 2011.
- Data from the Sherriff's Office demonstrated a 46% decrease in Operating While Intoxicated (OWI) arrests in four years, from 334 arrests in 2008 to 180 arrests in 2012.
- Public drunkenness offenses also decreased by 45% during the years 2008 to 2012.
- Michigan City Police also saw significant decreases in the numbers of individuals arrested for OWI offenses - nearly 60% in the four year period 2008 to 2012.
- Among juvenile probationers, the number of ABC status offenses (underage alcohol use) decreased by 12%, from 196 in 2008 to 173 in 2012.
- In 2012, only 5 of the 10 fatal car collisions that occurred in LaPorte County were the result of alcohol, down from 8 in 2008 and 10 in 2011.

Heroin Indicators: Treatment and Law Enforcement Data

Heroin treatment admissions exploded from 2008 to 2011, making heroin the most significant emergent drug threat to LaPorte County over the past several years. Treatment admissions for heroin increased by 560% in just three years, from 20 admissions in 2008 to 132 admissions in 2011.

- The majority of people entering treatment for heroin -75% were under age 30 in 2011. Age of first use is a significant concern because the trajectory of heroin use and dependency can result in considerable long-term health and financial consequences for the individual.
- Heroin appears to be problem among only white individuals in LaPorte County. Of those
 entering treatment for heroin in 2011, all admissions excluding one multiracial individual, were
 for white LaPorte County residents. No African American individuals entered treatment for
 heroin in 2011.
- Women and men were equally likely to enter treatment for heroin in 2011 (63 versus 69), invalidating the assumption that only males use "hard drugs" like heroin. Findings from the key informant interviews also verify that women are as likely to report heroin use as men.
- LaPorte City Metro Operations data indicates that the largest increases in drug arrests were heroin-related offenses, which increased 290%, from 10 arrests in 2008 to 39 arrests in 2012.

Marijuana Indicators: Treatment and Law Enforcement Data

Marijuana treatment admissions in LaPorte County more than doubled during the 2008-2011 period. The number of LaPorte residents receiving treatment for marijuana increased by 126%, from 46 episodes in 2008 to 104 episodes in 2011.

- The majority of people receiving treatment for marijuana were under age 30 in 2008 and 2011. In 2008, those under the age of 30 comprised 76% of marijuana treatment episodes, while in 2011, this number had dropped slightly to 69%.
- The fastest growing treatment admissions occurred among the 30 to 39 year old age cohort. This cohort comprised only 15 percent of treatment episodes in 2008, but rose to nearly 25% in 2011.
- Treatment admissions for African American individuals increased more rapidly than treatment episodes for whites during 2008-2011. However, white individuals made up the majority of treatment episodes in both 2008 and 2011.
- Women made up about one-fourth of marijuana admissions in 2008, but made up about one-third of marijuana treatment admissions in 2011
- Michigan City Metro Operations data showed that marijuana arrests increased about 50%, from 142 arrests in 2008 to 192 arrests in 2012.
- Among juveniles, Michigan City Metro Operations data demonstrated a 65% increase in marijuana possessions offenses, from 20 arrests in 2008 to 33 arrests in 2012.

Opiate Pill Indicators: Treatment and Law Enforcement Data

In addition to heroin, opiate pills such as Vicodin, oxycodone and others, represent a significant drug problem in LaPorte County. As has been noted in current research, approximately 75% of new heroin users transition to heroin following a period of opiate pill use. Once the pills become difficult or costly to acquire, it becomes easier and less expensive to use heroin. Key informants have suggested that this is happening in the LaPorte treatment population well. Therefore, the opiate pills users of today may become tomorrow's heroin users.

- Key informant interviews among hospital staff and law enforcement indicated that opiate pill use was an increasing and serious problem in the county.
- Treatment admissions for other opiate pills increased significantly from 2008 to 2011. In just three years, these admissions rose 250%, from 16 individuals in 2008 to 56 individuals in 2011.
- Patients treated for opiates tended to be significantly older than patients treated for heroin use.
 In 2011, about 51% of those treated for opiates, excluding heroin, were aged 30 and older. The most rapid growth in treatment episodes occurred among the 30 to 39 age cohort. Although the number of cases was small, the number of admissions among this cohort increased 700%, from 2 cases in 2008 to 16 cases in 2011
- The majority of those entering treatment for opiates other than heroin in 2011 were White, with just two cases reporting another race besides White and 6 cases unreported. No African Americans in LaPorte were admitted into treatment for opiates in 2011.
- In 2011, the number of women entering treatment for opiates surpassed the number of men entering treatment for opiates (33% versus 23%). This differs from the gender profile in 2008, as males and females entered treatment for opiates at the same rate during that year.
- Arrests for opioid pills reported by LaPorte City Metro Operations increased 480%, from 5 arrests in 2008 to 29 arrests in 2012.

Cocaine Indicators: Treatment and Law Enforcement Data

While cocaine treatment admissions increased slightly, they remained lower than treatment admissions for most other drugs except methamphetamine. The low number of cocaine treatment admissions in LaPorte County coincides with national treatment trends indicating a reduction in cocaine treatment admissions overall. As more individuals initiate to heroin and opiate use, the number of individuals seeking treatment for cocaine should continue to decrease over the next few years.

- In 2011, nearly half of all individuals admitted to treatment were age 30 or older. This suggests that cocaine users in LaPorte County are an aging cohort overall, and key informant interview data with treatment providers support this hypothesis. However, there is a bimodal distribution among those admitted to treatment for cocaine in LaPorte County. The two largest cohorts were those in their 20s (12 cases) and those in their 40s (13 cases) in 2011.
- Treatment admissions among white individuals increased during this time period, while treatment admissions among African American individuals remained stable. Overall, whites

were much more likely to enter treatment for cocaine than were African Americans (26% versus 10%).

- Females were more likely than males to be admitted to treatment for cocaine in both 2008 and 2011. Females comprised 60% of the LaPorte cocaine treatment admissions in 2008 and 2011 and males comprised 40% of the cocaine treatment admissions during those years.
- LaPorte City Metro Operations data showed a dramatic 55% reduction in arrests for cocaine, from 62 arrests in 2008 to 28 arrests in 2012.
- Michigan City Metro Operations data also showed a 45% decline in the number of arrests for cocaine possession, from 20 arrests in 2008 to just 11 in 2012.

Methamphetamines: Treatment and Law Enforcement Data

Methamphetamines are a decreasing problem in LaPorte County. Several years ago, the county was asked to prepare for the possibility of methamphetamine production and use among residents, particularly because the county does include some rural communities and these are the areas hardest hit by methamphetamine use. Since that time, the methamphetamine problem has remained very small and seemingly very contained. As of 2011, there were just 4 treatment episodes related to methamphetamine. Law enforcement indicators remain stable. We expect that methamphetamine use, arrests and production labs should continue to remain stable or decline over the next few years.

Drugs and Mortality in LaPorte County

Interview and data retrieved from the coroner's office indicates that in 2012, 35 individuals died from an accidental drug overdose. Of these deaths, 57% included death from heroin alone (5 cases) or in combination with another drug (15). About 43% of deaths due to drugs in the county were unrelated to heroin use. These data suggest that heroin related mortality is a large and growing problem in LaPorte County. Further, the number of individuals who died from drug-induced causes was significantly greater than those killed by alcohol-related car collisions or from alcohol period.